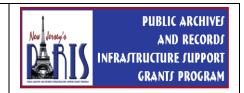


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Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Maps

From: John M. Delaney [mailto:delaney@Princeton.EDU]

Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 12:42 PM **To:** MARAC NJ CAUCUS@Princeton.EDU

Subject: In time for Christmas: Princeton's NJ Sanborn maps now online

A Major New Jersey Historical Resource Is Now Online

Princeton's project to organize, archivally house, catalog, and scan all 16,000 sheets of its historic collection of Sanborn Company fire insurance maps of New Jersey has been completed. Accelerated last year with a New Jersey Historical Commission grant, the work has been in progress since 2003. Many deserve credit. Princeton students, part-time during the academic months and full-time during the summers, have done a major part of the housing and scanning work, particularly Heidi Lam "08, Drew Dixon "09, Nate Bickford "09, and Laural Huchel "10. The Princeton University Library digital studio, run by Roel Muñoz and his dedicated staff (Erika Eggleston, Mary Marrero, Nicole Robinson, Joanna Tully), contributed about half of the images. All of the MARC cataloging of the sheets was done by Gail Smith, a senior bibliographic specialist in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collection. Wangyal Shaw, Princeton's GIS librarian, handled the loading and processing of the digital files, and has recently implemented a new, simple-to-use, high-resolution viewer for the images.

The starting point to the online maps is this Excel spreadsheet: http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbsc/aids/sanborn/sanborn-web.xls

Here, all the sheets are listed in alphabetical order by county, then by town/city, then chronologically by date. Each town or city link leads to a town/city website that lists each individual sheet, grouped by year. Princeton, for example, has Sanborn sheets for 1885, 1890, 1905, 1902, 1906, 1911, 1918, 1927. Clicking on the individual sheet brings up its high-resolution digital image. Copyright restrictions prevent us from showing online images of post-1922 maps—but even those are listed on these websites and can be viewed in person in our department's reading room in Firestone Library. If the sheet or year is not represented, we don't have it. A good way to get an idea of which sheet you need to see is to start with an "overview" sheet, if one is provided in the list.

All the Sanborn records are also available by searching in Princeton University Library's online catalog. There is one record for each city/town/year. A URL in that record will also bring you to the town/city's website. One easy way is to browse the maps in a subject search, using a phrase like "maps—new jersey".

My recommendation to NJ historical societies and other institutions with anticipated high level interest in these maps: copy and paste the Excel spreadsheet on your pc. That way you will have instant access to these wonderful maps. We will be making small cosmetic changes to the town/city websites in the future, but the links in the spreadsheet won't be affected, nor those from the actual sheets. Feel free to make links to the town/city websites as well.

For those of you New Jerseyans who have never looked at a Sanborn fire insurance map: Do so now, for you've been missing out on a truly fabulous resource for tracking the historic development of your own community! Your own home or place of business may be on the map!

As a realist, I must expect that there will be issues/problems accessing some of the maps some of the time—but I'm also hopeful that they will be small and diminish over time! Please spread the cheer!

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